

Submission for the Record
Hearing on Letting Kids Be Kids
5/9/13

My name is Linda Young and I am a foster parent with Arrow Child & Family Ministries. My husband and I have been fostering for over 24 years and currently have 3 teen-aged boys. I was so happy to see that it has been recognized that the rules and regulations for both kids and families is way too restrictive. It is unrealistic to expect families of their friends to go through the background checks required before they can visit. That is just one example of carrying safety a bit too far.

In our years of fostering close to 200 children, my husband and I have always taken a week vacation to recharge and reconnect with each other. We have always had caregivers who were familiar with our kids and we felt comfortable leaving them with. We have never had any issues or problems with them. We are about to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary and would like to go on a trip. I have been notified that whoever fills in for us will have to go through the same training we did to become licensed! Who would do that? No one I know. So, we will either be "out of compliance" or forced to cancel our plans. I am asking that this restriction be modified so that foster parents can take a much needed break using their own choice of caregivers with a background check, CPR and First Aid training. If potential foster parents were aware that they could never again go on vacation without asking someone to take 8-10 weeks of classes to fill in for them, you would see a tremendous drop in new foster parents. Current parents will eventually burn out or be cited for non-compliance.

As foster parents, we are already under pressure to do weekly progress reports on each child, have fire inspections, welcome caseworkers into our home constantly, follow dozens of rules regarding medication storage and household items, transport the children to visits and a multitude of other rules and tasks. All this is in addition to the actual care of the kids. I could fill up a book on the daily life of a foster parent, but I'm sure you get the idea. Please remove just one of the barriers to us being able to continue to foster these boys. We cannot do this forever without a break.

Sincerely,

Linda Young
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